

Traffic Safety News and Facts for Employers November 15, 2005

Michigan News You Can Use

Child Restraint Use/Misuse

Wayne State University recently completed a report on behalf of the Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning (OHSP) that confirms national findings that children who are involved in a traffic crash may suffer severe injuries or even death due to the lack of, or improper use of, child restraint devices (CRD). Major findings of the report included: In an observation study, 80% of children were in CRD's, 71% of those were misused in some way; half of the drivers who did not buckle up did not use CRD's, while 81% of buckled parents used CRD's; the most common misuse problems were getting the tether tight and routed correctly and getting the harness tight and clipped correctly; unfortunately, the "Latch" system has not helped. 43% of cars that had "latch" did not use it (and in some cases even know about it). Those who did use it were less likely to have it correctly installed.

The full report by Wayne State will be available on OHSP's web page in the near future. You will be notified when the report is available. In the meantime OHSP has several brochures and flyers which are available to you on proper child safety seat installation. More.....

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/catalog_for_web_127973_7.pdf The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration also has a wealth of information on this subject including a Child Safety Seat Inspection Station near you. More.....

<http://nhtsa.gov/portal/site/nhtsa/menuitem.9f8c7d6359e0e9bbbf30811060008a0c/?quickLinksSelect=%2Fportal%2Fsite%2Fnhtsa%2Fmenuitem.9f8c7d6359e0e9bbbf30811060008a0c%2F>

Ford To Launch Trucks With Mobile Office Capabilities

Ford Motor Co. announced its plans to offer wireless mobile offices in its F-series pickup trucks, an option aimed at contractors and others who do business on the road. The company expects to offer the mobile office as a dealer installed accessory in 2006. The system incorporates a flat Stargate Mobile computer, which is powered by the truck's battery and mounted on a stand between the driver's seat and passenger seat. The computer has a touch-screen option (eliminating the need for a keyboard or mouse) and is designed to be removed from the stand and taken to a work site. It stays connected to the Internet via a broadband wireless cellular card. Read the full article at

http://www.usatoday.com/tech/products/2005-11-01-ford-pcs_x.htm

NETS Features

New Technologies Take Center Stage, But Drivers Should Proceed With Caution

The 12th Annual World Congress on Intelligent Transport Systems, recently held in San Francisco, showcased some of the newest advances in automotive technology and offered glimpses at what the future might hold for drivers. More....

http://www.trafficsafety.org/newsletter/technologies_111505feat.asp



The Great Debate About Red Light Cameras

Red light cameras are causing controversy in cities large and small, according to a recent news report. The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety estimates that red-light runners were responsible for almost 200,000 crashes in 2004, which caused nearly 170,000 injuries and 1,000 deaths. In response, many cities are turning to red-light cameras as a deterrent. However, some reports suggest that the cameras do not help in the effort to reduce crashes and save lives. Read the full article at <http://www.knoxstudio.com/shns/story.cfm?pk=REDLIGHTCAMERAS-11-09-05&cat=AN>

Researchers Seek To Give GPS A Makeover

When it comes to GPS, a group of Stanford University researchers want to make a good thing better. Today a handheld GPS can locate a point on the ground within five or 10 meters, while the more expensive military GPS systems can pinpoint or receive within five meters or fewer. The researchers want to create a navigation system capable of locating objects within one centimeter, or less than half an inch. The center hopes to achieve that goal within the next 20 years. An upgraded GPS system could lead to significant advances within the commercial and military arenas. Read the full article at http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/business/technology/2002608435_btgps07.html

Naval Safety Center Issues Warning To Drivers

The U.S. Naval Safety Center issued a strong warning in response to reaching its highest level of private motor vehicle fatalities during this fiscal year. The Center is encouraging sailors to be rested before a long drive, adjust their driving techniques to roadway conditions, maintain control of their vehicles, avoid drinking and driving, and always wear their seat belts.

Survey Finds Most Drivers Are Concerned About Alcohol Impaired Driving

According to a new survey conducted by the Gallup Organization, which was commissioned by Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) and Nationwide Insurance, nearly all respondents view drinking and driving as the most serious highway safety threat. The survey results also revealed strong support for strict support and penalties for alcohol-impaired drivers.

Study: Crashes Involving Children Tend To Be Local, Moderate Speeds

A new study by the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and State Farm Insurance Companies found that 80 percent of traffic crashes involving children under the age of 16 occur 20 minutes or less from their homes, and more than half of these crashes occurred at speeds under 45 mph. Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for children over the age of 1 in the United States. However, researchers note that proper seat restraints and seating children under the age of 12 in rear seats could help reduce these deaths. To view the full report visit <http://www.traumalink.chop.edu>

Association Pitches Four-Pronged Approach To Reduce Distracted Driving

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials has proposed a four-pronged approach to lessen deaths and injuries due to inattentive driving. The four strategies include making roadways safer for drowsy and distracted drivers, providing safe stopping and resting areas, increase driver awareness about the risks involved with distracted and/or drowsy driving and promote driver focus, and implement programs targeting those at greatest risk for distracted and/or drowsy driving. To purchase a copy of the proposal, visit <http://www.national-academies.org/trb/bookstore>

Study: Alcohol Treatment Reduces Crash Rate Among Patients

It is well known that driving under the influence of alcohol increases the risk of traffic crashes. What may be less well known is that alcohol-dependent drivers are responsible for two-thirds of motor

vehicle crashes involving alcohol, and studies have shown a relationship between alcohol dependence and traffic crashes. A recent study analyzed the effect that treatment of patients with alcohol-related problems had on their crash rate. Researchers found that the prevalence of traffic problems among those patients who followed treatment for 1 year was lower than in the year before treatment. According to researchers, the study showed that treatment is effective in reducing traffic problems.

Source: Accident Analysis Prevention Authors: M.T. Gómez-Talegó and F.J. Alvarez

Electronic Stability Control Lowers Insurance Costs, For Some

A new report issued by the Highway Loss Data Institute indicates that having electronic stability control (ESC) on a vehicle will “significantly lower” drivers’ insurance losses for crash damage to their vehicle, but it has a negligible effect on these losses for other people’s vehicles involved in a multiple vehicle crash. Collision coverage losses were 30 percent lower for SUVs with ESC, 16 percent lower for luxury cars, and 13 percent lower for sports cars.

Drivers With All-Season Tires: Don’t Rule Out Winter Tires Just Yet

Although commercials touting sophisticated driving systems and all-season tires make winter driving seem like a drive in the park, manufacturers warn that these advances might be giving some a false sense of security. According to some experts, the best way to ensure grip and performance during winter months is still a good set of winter tires. Read the full article at

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/9812900/>

Researchers Address Drowsy Driving Public Awareness, Education

Driver fatigue accounts for 10 to 40% of all roadway crashes. While many safety efforts have been implemented to address other risky driving behaviors, both public awareness and legal developments have been slow to address drowsy driving. Researchers recently reviewed information from a wide variety of sources including governments, road safety groups and the scientific literature to gain a better understanding of the issue. They addressed key areas for improvement in education to include personalizing the risk to drivers and developing simple metrics for the self-assessment of fatigue. They also found that legal implications should be more clearly defined and specific laws are needed to more effectively prosecute fatigued drivers who cause crashes.

Source: Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health Authors: A. Fletcher, K. McCulloch, S.D. Baulk, D. Dawson

Work-Life:

TRB Releases New Report On Safe Mobility For Older Drivers

The Transportation Research Board has recently made available “Safe Mobility for Older Americans: Report of the Committee for the Conference on Transportation in an Aging Society,” which seeks to summarize research accomplishments made during the past decade related to the mobility of older Americans. The report also includes recommendations for policy makers, the research community, government agencies, older persons and their caregivers, the private sector, and other stakeholders to improve older adult safety and mobility and to spur research in needed areas. View the full report at <http://www.trb.org/publications/conf/CPW2.pdf>

Survey: Older Drivers Unlikely To Discuss Safe Driving With Doctors

A new online survey conducted by AAA and the U.S. Bone and Joint Decade found that less than a quarter of older patients have ever asked about their ability to drive safely. The survey fielded responses from nurses and doctors. The study also found that 51 percent of health care providers said that none of their patients have ever brought up the subject. Despite the hesitancy by older patients, 84 percent of the doctors and nurses surveyed felt that hospitals and doctor offices should provide motor vehicle safety information to their elderly patients.

International Traffic Safety News:

Canadian Drivers: Beware Of Caribou

Drivers in parts of Canada frequented by caribou will find new signage alerting them that they have entered “caribou territory.” Part of the Parks Canada Caribou Recovery Plan, a series of roadside signs will inform motorists that they are traveling in caribou territory and to be alert for their presence. In addition, the area will be equipped with bilingual digital traffic signs showing the silhouette of a caribou, followed by the message ‘reduce speed, max 70 km’ and then followed by a display of the approaching vehicle’s current speed. Read the full article at <http://www.jasperbooster.com/story.php?id=195198>

Britain’s Tough Driving Laws Lead To Lowest Fatality Rate

Britain is home to some of the world’s toughest roadway rules. And now that distinction has earned them more recognition. Britain also enjoys the world’s lowest driving fatality rates. Traffic crashes on Britain’s roadways have been halved since their peak during the mid-1960s—even though the number of licensed vehicles increased nearly three times. Their success is attributed to a difficult driving test, strict enforcement, ad campaigns, and speed bumps.

Company Car Drivers In The UK Could Face Smoking Ban

UK company car drivers could be banned from smoking behind the wheel while carrying a passenger as part of the government’s new health bill. Fleets are being warned that a vehicle used by more than one person should be treated as an extension to the workplace and that failing to do so could have serious health and safety implications. The ban among fleet drivers comes as the government’s new health bill seeks to ban smoking in all workplaces by summer 2007.

Company Car Drivers Face Heightened Risk Of Theft

UK company car drivers are twice as likely as other motorists to become victims of smash-and-grab attacks while sitting in a jam or at traffic lights, new research has found. The study concluded that one in 10 fleet vehicles fell victim to car crime in the last 12 months. The most common items stolen included: briefcases/luggage (21%), laptops (20%), mobile phones (20%), CDs/cassettes (13%), cash/check books/ credit cards (13%), clothes (10%), and digital cameras (6%).